

Vegetable Subgroups in the National School Lunch Program

The National School Lunch Program (NSLP) meal patterns for grades K-12 require a daily serving of the vegetables component and weekly servings of five vegetable subgroups. For guidance on the NSLP meal pattern requirements for each grade group, visit the Connecticut State Department of Education's (CSDE) [Meal Patterns for Grades K-12 in School Nutrition Programs](#) webpage

The vegetable subgroups include dark green, red/orange, beans and peas (legumes), starchy, and other. They are based on the recommendations of the [Dietary Guidelines for Americans](#) and the [vegetables group](#) in Choose MyPlate. The chart on page 3 identifies common vegetables in each subgroup.

Requirements for the Vegetable Subgroups

School food authorities (SFAs) may offer the vegetable subgroups in any order and amount throughout the week, as long as the lunch menu meets the minimum weekly requirements. If a school has multiple serving lines, each serving line must offer the minimum amount of the five vegetable subgroups on a weekly basis. The following example illustrates this requirement:

A school has a hot lunch line, a deli line, and a grill line. Monday's hot lunch menu offers baked beans (legumes subgroup) as the daily vegetable. To meet the weekly requirements, baked beans (or another vegetable from the legumes subgroup) must also be available on the other two serving lines. For example, Monday's menu for the deli line and grill line must include baked beans or another legume such as garbanzo beans or lentils. It is not acceptable for the SFA to post signs on the deli line and grill line directing students to select the vegetable subgroup choice from a **different** serving line. Each serving line must offer the full reimbursable meal, including all vegetable subgroups on a weekly basis.

All students must have access to the required quantities of the five vegetable subgroups each week on each serving line.

For detailed guidance on the requirements for the vegetable subgroups, refer to section 3 of the CSDE's guide, [Menu Planning Guide for School Meals for Grades K-12](#).



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Crediting Vegetables

The vegetables component includes fresh, frozen, canned, and rehydrated dried vegetables; and 100 percent full-strength vegetable juice. A serving of cooked vegetables must be drained. Pureed vegetables in smoothies credit only as juice. Vegetable juice cannot exceed half of the weekly amount (cups) of vegetables offered at lunch. For more information, refer to the CSDE's resource, [Crediting Juice in the NSLP and SBP](#).

Vegetables credit toward the vegetable subgroups based on the yields and crediting information in the USDA's [Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs](#) (FBG). All vegetables credit based on volume (cups) with the exceptions below.

- Raw leafy greens credit as half the volume served, e.g., ½ cup of raw leafy greens credits as ¼ cup of the vegetables component. Examples of raw leafy greens include kale, greens (e.g., beet, collard, mustard, and turnip), spinach, arugula, and lettuce (e.g., iceberg, romaine, Boston, Bibb, red leaf, and spring mix).
- Dried or dehydrated vegetables (such as potato flakes and dried soup mix) credit based on the amount of vegetables per serving in the rehydrated volume. A product formulation statement (PFS) is required (refer to “Required Documentation” below).

For more information on crediting vegetables, visit the “[Vegetables Component for Grades K-12](#)” section of the CSDE's [Crediting Foods in School Nutrition Programs](#) webpage.

Required Documentation

Commercial processed vegetable products (such as vegetable egg rolls and breaded onion rings) and vegetables prepared from scratch with added ingredients (such as coleslaw, mashed potatoes, and carrot-raisin salad) require documentation to indicate the amount of vegetables per serving. Commercially prepared foods with added ingredients require a PFS stating the specific contribution of each vegetable subgroup per serving. For information on PFS forms, refer to the CSDE's resources, [Product Formulation Statements](#) and [Accepting Processed Product Documentation in the NSLP and SBP](#); and the USDA's [Product Formulation Statement for Documenting Vegetables and Fruits in School Meal Programs](#) and [Tips for Evaluating a Manufacturer's Product Formulation Statement](#). For additional guidance, visit the “[Crediting Commercial Processed Products](#)” section of the CSDE's [Crediting Foods in School Nutrition Programs](#) webpage.

Foods made from scratch require a standardized recipe that indicates the amount of each vegetable subgroup per serving. For information on standardized recipes, visit the “[Crediting Foods Made from Scratch](#)” section of the CSDE's [Crediting Foods in School Nutrition Programs](#) webpage.

Vegetable Subgroups in the NSLP

Dark Green Fresh, frozen, and canned		Red/Orange Fresh, frozen, and canned		Beans and Peas (Legumes)* Cooked from dry, canned, or frozen		
■ Arugula	■ Fiddle heads	■ Acorn squash	■ Pumpkin	■ Black beans	■ Great northern beans	■ Pink beans
■ Beet greens	■ Grape leaves	■ Butternut squash	■ Red chili peppers	■ Black-eyed peas (mature, dry)	■ Kidney beans	■ Pinto beans
■ Bok choy	■ Kale	■ Carrots (orange only)	■ Red peppers	■ Cowpeas	■ Lentils	■ Red beans
■ Broccoli	■ Mesclun	■ Cherry peppers	■ Salsa (100% vegetables)	■ Edamame	■ Lima beans, (mature, dry)	■ Refried beans
■ Broccoli rabe (rapini)	■ Mustard greens	■ Hubbard squash	■ Spaghetti squash	■ Fava beans	■ Mung beans	■ Soy beans (mature, dry)
■ Broccolini	■ Parsley	■ Orange peppers	■ Sweet potatoes	■ Garbanzo beans (chickpeas)	■ Navy beans	■ Split peas
■ Butterhead lettuce (Boston, Bibb)	■ Spinach	■ Pimientos	■ Tomatoes	* Does not include immature (fresh) beans or peas, such as green beans, green lima beans and green (string) beans		
■ Chicory	■ Swiss chard		■ Tomato juice			
■ Cilantro	■ Red leaf lettuce		■ Winter squash			
■ Collard greens	■ Romaine lettuce		■ Yams			
■ Endive	■ Turnip greens					
■ Escarole	■ Watercress					
Starchy Fresh, frozen, and canned		Other Fresh, frozen, and canned				
■ Black-eyed peas, fresh (not dry)	■ Jicama	■ Artichokes	■ Cactus (nopales)	■ Eggplant	■ Onions (white, yellow, red)	■ Snap peas
■ Corn	■ Lima beans, green (not dry)	■ Asparagus	■ Cauliflower	■ Fennel	■ Peas in pod, e.g., snap peas, snow peas	■ Snow peas
■ Cassava	■ Parsnips	■ Avocado	■ Carrots, rainbow (e.g., pink, purple, red, white, and yellow)	■ Garlic	■ Pepperoncini	■ Tomatillo
■ Cowpeas, fresh (not dry)	■ Pigeon peas, fresh (not dry)	■ Bamboo shoots	■ Celeriac	■ Green chili peppers	■ Pickles (cucumber)	■ Turnips
■ Field peas, fresh (not dry)	■ Plantains	■ Bean sprouts, cooked only (for food safety), e.g., alfalfa, mung	■ Celery	■ Green onions (scallions)	■ Purple peppers	■ Wax beans
■ Green bananas	■ Poi	■ Beans, green and yellow	■ Chayote (mirliton)	■ Horseradish	■ Radishes	■ White sweet potatoes
■ Green peas	■ Taro	■ Beets	■ Cucumbers	■ Iceberg lettuce	■ Rhubarb	■ Yellow peppers
■ Hominy, whole (canned, drained)	■ Water chestnuts	■ Breadfruit	■ Chives	■ Kohlrabi	■ Rutabagas	■ Yellow summer squash
	■ Yautia (tannier)	■ Brussels sprouts	■ Daikon (oriental radish)	■ Leeks	■ Shallots	■ Zucchini squash
		■ Cabbage (green, red, celery, Napa)		■ Mushrooms	■ Sauerkraut	
				■ Okra	■ Seaweed	
				■ Olives		

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Resources

Crediting Foods in School Nutrition Programs (CSDE webpage):
<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Crediting-Foods-in-School-Nutrition-Programs>

Crediting Juice for Grades K-12 in the NSLP and SBP (CSDE):
https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/NSLP/Crediting/Credit_Juice_SNP_grades_K-12.pdf

Crediting Legumes in the NSLP and SBP (CSDE):
https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/NSLP/Crediting/Credit_Legumes_SNP.pdf

Crediting Smoothies for Grades K-12 in the NSLP and SBP (CSDE):
https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/NSLP/Crediting/Credit_Smoothies_SNP_grades_K-12.pdf

Crediting Soup in the NSLP and SBP (CSDE):
https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/NSLP/Crediting/Credit_Soups_SNP.pdf

CSDE Operational Memorandum No. 07-19: Compliance Issues with the Vegetables and Fruits Components for Grades K-12 in the NSLP and SBP:
<https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/NSLP/Memos/OM2019/OM07-19.pdf>

Food Buying Guide Section 2: Overview of Crediting Requirements for the Vegetables Component (USDA):
https://foodbuyingguide.fns.usda.gov/Content/TablesFBG/USDA_FBG_Section2_Vegetables.pdf

Food Buying Guide Section 2: Yield Table for Vegetables (USDA):
https://foodbuyingguide.fns.usda.gov/files/Reports/USDA_FBG_Section2_VegetablesYieldTable.pdf

Meal Patterns for Grades K-12 in School Nutrition Programs (CSDE webpage):
<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Meal-Patterns-School-Nutrition-Programs>

Menu Planning Guide for School Meals for Grades K-12 (CSDE):
<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Menu-Planning-Guide-for-School-Meals>

Resources for the School Meal Patterns for Grades K-12 (CSDE):
https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/NSLP/MealPattern/ResourcesSchoolMealPatterns_gradesK-12.pdf

Product Formulation Statement for Documenting Vegetables and Fruits in School Meal Programs (USDA):
https://fns-prod.azureedge.net/sites/default/files/resource-files/PFS_Veg_Subgroups_Fruits_Fillable_508.pdf

Product Formulation Statements (CSDE):
https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/NSLP/Crediting/Product_Formulation_Statements.pdf

USDA Memo SP 26-2019, CACFP 13-2019 and SFSP 12-2019: Crediting Pasta Products Made of Vegetable Flour in the Child Nutrition Programs:
<https://www.fns.usda.gov/cn/crediting-pasta-products-made-vegetable-flour-child-nutrition-programs>

USDA Memo SP 40-2019, CACFP 17-2019 and SFSP 17-2019: Smoothies Offered in Child Nutrition Programs:
<https://www.fns.usda.gov/cn/smoothies-offered-child-nutrition-programs>

Vegetables Component for Grades K-12 (CSDE webpage):
<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Crediting-Foods-in-School-Nutrition-Programs/Documents#Vegetables>

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For more information, refer to the Connecticut State Department of Education's (CSDE), [Menu Planning Guide for School Meals for Grades K-12](#) and visit the CSDE's [Meal Patterns for Grades K-12 in School Nutrition Programs](#) and [Crediting Foods in School Nutrition Programs](#) webpages, or contact the [school nutrition programs staff](#) in the CSDE's Bureau of Health/Nutrition, Family Services and Adult Education, 450 Columbus Boulevard, Suite 504, Hartford, CT 06103-1841.

This document is available at https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/NSLP/Crediting/Vegetable_Subgroups_NSLP.pdf.

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Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410;
- (2) fax: (202) 690-7442; or
- (3) email: program.intake@usda.gov.

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